Bio-technology for agriculture

3. DR. K. MALAISAMY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether India will be a leading country in 2020 in producing GM rice, wheat, vegetables by using bio-technology instead of conventional practices;

(b) the details of the move proposed towards this end; and

(c) what could be the adverse effect of soil by resorting to bio-technology and in using the products through bio-technology means?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) India considers biotechnology as a powerful tool in breaking breeding barriers. Accordingly, a special project on 'Transgenics in Crops' covering 14 crops, including rice and vegetables, has been undertaken. India continuous to strive for harnessing the benefits of biotechnology in conjunction with conventional tools, specially for managing various biotic and abiotic stresses and quality improvement.

(c) GM crops are released for commercial cultivation only after assessing the risk including that on soil, and after being satisfied about their safety in all respects.

Plantation of Jatropha and Karanja in Rajasthan for production of bio-diesel

4. DR. GYAN PRAKASH PILANIA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the programme for plantation of Jatropha curcas and Karanja for bio-diesel production in Rajasthan, initiated by National Oilseed and Vegetable Oils Development Board and amount allocated therefor;

(b) the special incentives provided to Rajasthan by the National Mission on bio-diesel;

(c) whether proper planning has been done for assured marketing of their produce at remunerative viable price;

(d) the land area presently covered under Jatropha/Karanja cultivation and potential expansion thereof during the next three years in Rajasthan; and

(e) the targets achieved, up-to-date?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) Details are given in the Statement-I (*See* below).

(b) The proposed National Mission on Bio-diesel is envisaged to be under the Department of Land Resources of the Ministry of Rural Development but is yet to become functional.

(c) The State Government of Rajasthan has fixed a Minimum Support Price of Rs.7/- per kg. for Jatropha seed. It has declared RAJFED as the nodal agency for purchase of Jatropha seeds for the coming three years.